

POEMS FOR
THE INNER LIFE

BY
JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

With Introductory Note by Rufus M. Jones, M.A., D. Litt.;
and Testimonies to Whittier's Influence,
by O. W. Holmes, H. W. Longfellow, and others.

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NOTE:—A good complete edition of the Poetical Works of J. G. Whittier is that edited by W. Garrett Horder, published by the Oxford University Press. Among general selections from the poems mention may be made of those containing careful introductions by Howard Hodgkin and Wilfred Whitten, published respectively by Routledge & Co. and Headley Brothers.

ALPHABETICAL INDEX TO TITLES.

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* WHITTIER THE MYSTIC.

By RUFUS M. JONES.

ALL the great modern English poets—in fact, all the greatest poets of all times and lands—have been mystics, or have shown at least a mystical strain.

Whittier is more fundamentally mystic than any other American poet. His mysticism does not rest on sporadic experiences, or on isolated lines; it is a structural part of his way of thinking, and it is the very warp and woof of his poetry. Like his friend Emerson, also a mystic, he “obeyed at eve the Voice obeyed at prime.” Writing in his old age, he says, “I have an unshaken faith in the one distinctive doctrine of Quakerism—the Light within—the Immanence of the Divine Spirit”; and he adds that the future hope of our religion lies “not in setting the letter above the spirit, not in substituting type and symbol, and oriental figure and hyperbole for the simple truths they were meant to represent; not in schools of theology; not in much speaking and noise and vehemence,—but in heeding more closely the Inward Guide and Teacher; in faith in Christ, not merely in the historical manifestation of the Divine Love to humanity, but *in His living presence in the heart, open to receive Him.*” Again he writes like a true prophet: “The hour is coming, under the searching eye of philosophy and the terrible analysis of science, when the letter and the outward evidence will not altogether

* A portion of an essay published in “The Friend” of Dec. 6th, 1907, with an addition.

avail us ; when the surest dependence must be upon the Light of Christ within, disclosing the law and prophets *in our own souls*, and confirming the truth of outward Scripture by inward experience ; when smooth stones from the brook of present experience shall prove mightier than the weapons of Saul ; when the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, as proclaimed by George Fox, and lived by John Woolman, shall be recognised as the only efficient solvent of doubts raised by an age of restless inquiry." A few years later he wrote to a friend : " Of one thing I feel sure—that something outside of myself speaks to me, and holds me to duty ; warns, reproves, and approves. It is good, for it requires me to be good ; it is wise, for it knows the thoughts and intents of the heart. It is to me a revelation of God."

In his noble auto-biographical poem—"My Namesake"—in which he says that he has "kept the faith of childish days," he touches these deeper experiences of the soul :

" But still his heart was full of awe
And reverence for all sacred things ;
And brooding over form and law,
He saw the Spirit's wings !

Life's mystery wrapt him like a cloud ;
He heard far voices mock his own,
The sweep of wings unseen, the loud,
Long roll of waves unknown.

And listening, with his forehead bowed,
Heard the Divine compassion fill
The pauses of the trump and cloud
With whispers small and still."

In "The Over-Heart" is a beautiful stanza which goes straight to the roots of reality:

"O hearts of Love ! O souls that turn
Like sunflowers to the pure and best !
To *you* the truth is manifest :
For they the mind of Christ discern
Who lean like John upon His breast."

To Whittier, as much as to any American of the last generation, is due the fact that in the face of crumbling theologies and shattered dogma, the religion of the Spirit has steadily gained its hold on men's hearts, and that faith has unspeakably widened and heightened, especially faith in the love of God. "I feel," he wrote to a friend, "I feel that love is victorious, that there is no dark it cannot light, no depth it cannot reach," and that profound conviction throbs and beats through all his religious poetry.



WHITTIER'S INFLUENCE.

By O. W. HOLMES, H. W. LONGFELLOW, &c.

THE influence of Whittier on the religious thought of the American people has been far greater, I believe, than that of the occupant of any pulpit. It is not by any attack upon the faith of any Christian fellowship that he did service for the liberal thought of our community. We never talked much about our doctrinal beliefs or unbeliefs—we felt that we were on common ground. His catholicity of feeling led him to attribute full value to the true man, no matter where he worshipped. . . . I was first drawn to him by his strong human sympathies. In the great struggle with slavery I found my slower sensibilities kindled by his burning enthusiasm ; but more than all I was attracted by that larger faith which is shared by the Brotherhood of Singers with whom he was enrolled.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

THE THREE SILENCES OF MOLINOS.

TO JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

Three Silences there are ; the first of speech,
The second of desire, the third of thought ;
This is the lore a Spanish monk, distraught
With dreams and visions, was the first to teach.

These Silences, commingling each with each,
Made up the perfect silence that he sought
And prayed for, and wherein at times he caught
Mysterious sounds from realms beyond our reach.

O thou, whose daily life anticipates
The life to come, and in whose thought and word
The spiritual world preponderates,
Hermit of Amesbury ! thou too hast heard
Voices and melodies from beyond the gates,
And speakest only when thy soul is stirred !

—*H. W. Longfellow.*

There was never a time when Whittier's life and message were more needed than to-day. . . . The severe simplicity, the lofty ideals, the conception of public life as a sphere of duty and service in which every sacrifice must be made for the right, these characteristics of the Quaker poet stand in significant contrast with some dominating features of American life to-day. And what is true of America is true of England. The religious thinking, the political aims and activities and the whole conception of life in both countries would gain immensely by a renewed study of this simple yet lofty soul, this child of the open air and the inner light, who found his good not in the world's honours or rewards, but in the doing of his daily duty, in the enrichment of his spiritual nature, and in joyous fellowship with his God.

—“*Christian World*,” Dec. 12, 1907.

Whittier's poetry has revealed to countless readers the patient continuity of human life, its fundamental unity, and the ultimate peace that hushes its discords. The utter simplicity of his Quaker's creed has helped him to interpret the religious mood of a generation which has grown impatient of formal doctrine. His hymns are sung by almost every body of Christians, the world over. It is unlikely that the plain old man who passed quietly away in the New Hampshire village on September 7th, 1892, aged eighty-five, will ever be reckoned one of the world-poets. But he was, in the best sense of the word, a world's man in heart and in action, a sincere and noble soul who hated whatever was evil and helped to make the good prevail.

—Bliss Perry (a former Editor of the “*Atlantic Monthly*,” where many of Whittier's poems appeared originally).

This selection from Whittier's Poems has been limited designedly to those pieces which are pre-eminently calculated to nourish the "inner life" of the Seeker after Truth. Several notes have been written specially for this edition. In those cases where only portions of poems are printed, omissions are clearly shown.

POEMS FOR THE INNER LIFE.

THE CALL OF THE CHRISTIAN.

Nor always as the whirlwind's rush
On Horeb's mount of fear,
Nor always as the burning bush
To Midian's shepherd seer,
Nor as the awful voice which came
To Israel's prophet bards,
Nor as the tongues of cloven flame,
Nor gift of fearful words,—

Nor always thus, with outward sign
Of fire or voice from Heaven,
The message of a truth divine,
The call of God is given!
Awaking in the human heart
Love for the true and right,—
Zeal for the Christian's better part,
Strength for the Christian's fight.

Nor unto manhood's heart alone
The holy influence steals:
Warm with a rapture not its own,
The heart of woman feels!
As she who by Samaria's wall
The Saviour's errand sought—
As those who with the fervent Paul
And meek Aquila wrought:

Or those meek ones whose martyrdom
Rome's gathered grandeur saw:
Or those who in their Alpine home
Braved the Crusader's war,
When the green Vaudois, trembling, heard,
Through all its vales of death,
The martyr's song of triumph poured
From woman's failing breath.

And gently, by a thousand things
Which o'er our spirits pass,
Like breezes o'er the harp's fine strings,
Or vapours o'er a glass,
Leaving their token strange and new
Of music or of shade,
The summons to the right and true
And merciful is made.

Oh, then, if gleams of truth and light
Flash o'er thy waiting mind,
Unfolding to thy mental sight
The wants of human-kind;
If, brooding over human grief,
The earnest wish is known
To soothe and gladden with relief
An anguish not thine own;
Though heralded with naught of fear,
Or outward sign or show;
Though only to the inward ear
It whispers soft and low;
Though dropping, as the manna fell,
Unseen, yet from above,
Noiseless as dew-fall, heed it well,—
Thy Father's call of love!

1833.

THE QUAKER OF THE OLDEN TIME.

THE Quaker of the olden time!
How calm and firm and true,
Unspotted by its wrong and crime,
He walked the dark earth through.
The lust of power, the love of gain,
The thousand lures of sin
Around him, had no power to stain
The purity within.
With that deep insight which detects
All great things in the small,
And knows how each man's life affects
The spiritual life of all,

He walked by faith and not by sight,
By love and not by law;
The presence of the wrong or right
He rather felt than saw.

He felt that wrong with wrong partakes,
That nothing stands alone,
That whoso gives the motive, makes
His brother's sin his own.
And, pausing not for doubtful choice
Of evils great or small,
He listened to that inward voice
Which called away from all.

O Spirit of that early day,
So pure and strong and true,
Be with us in the narrow way
Our faithful fathers knew.
Give strength the evil to forsake,
The cross of Truth to bear,
And love and reverent fear to make
Our daily lives a prayer!

1838.

TO——,

With a copy of John Woolman's Journal.

"Get the writings of John Woolman by heart."

Essays of Elia.

A valuable commentary on this poem is Whittier's
prose introduction to Woolman's Journal. (Headley's
"Pocket Edition.")

EARLY hath Life's mighty question
Thrilled within thy heart of youth,
With a deep and strong beseeching:
What and where is Truth?

And to thee an answer cometh
From the earth and from the sky,
And to thee the hills and waters
And the stars reply.

But a soul-sufficing answer
Hath no outward origin;
More than Nature's many voices
May be heard within.

.

Not to ease and aimless quiet
Doth that inward answer tend,
But to works of love and duty
As our being's end;

Not to idle dreams and trances,
Length of face, and solemn tone,
But to Faith, in daily striving
And performance shown.

Earnest toil and strong endeavour
Of a spirit which within
Wrestles with familiar evil
And besetting sin;

And without, with tireless vigour,
Steady heart, and weapon strong,
In the power of truth assailing
Every form of wrong.

Guided thus, how passing lovely
Is the track of Woolman's feet!
And his brief and simple record
How serenely sweet!

O'er life's humblest duties throwing
Light the earthling never knew,
Freshening all its dark waste places
As with Hermon's dew.

All which glows in Pascal's pages,
All which sainted Guion sought,
Or the blue-eyed German Rahel
Half-unconscious taught :

Beauty, such as Goethe pictured,
Such as Shelley dreamed of, shed
Living warmth and starry brightness
Round that poor man's head.

Not a vain and cold ideal,
Not a poet's dream alone,
But a presence warm and real,
Seen and felt and known.

1840.

.

TO MY FRIEND, ON THE DEATH OF HIS SISTER.

Sophia Sturge, sister of Joseph Sturge, of Birmingham, the President of the British Complete Suffrage Association, died in the 6th month, 1845. She was the colleague, counsellor, and ever-ready help-mate of her brother in all his vast designs of beneficence.

THINE is a grief, the depth of which another
May never know ;
Yet, o'er the waters, O my stricken brother !
To thee I go.

I lean my heart unto thee, sadly folding
Thy hand in mine ;
With even the weakness of my soul upholding
The strength of thine.

.

With silence only as their benediction,
 God's angels come
Where, in the shadow of a great affliction,
 The soul sits dumb!

Yet, would I say what thy own heart approveth :
 Our Father's will,
Calling to Him the dear one whom He loveth,
 Is mercy still.

Not upon thee or thine the solemn angel
 Hath evil wrought :
Her funeral anthem is a glad evangel,—
 The good die not !

God calls our loved ones, but we lose not wholly
 What He hath given ;
They live on earth, in thought and deed, as truly
 As in His heaven.

And she is with thee ; in thy path of trial
 She walketh yet ;
Still with the baptism of thy self-denial
 Her locks are wet.

Up, then, my brother ! Lo, the fields of harvest
 Lie white in view !
She lives and loves thee, and the God thou servest
 To both is true.

Thrust in thy sickle ! England's toilworn peasants
 Thy call abide ;
And she thou mourn'st, a pure and holy presence,
 Shall glean beside !

1845.

MY SOUL AND I.

.

Know well, my soul, God's hand controls
 Whate'er thou fearest ;
Round Him in calmest music rolls
 Whate'er thou hearest.

What to thee is shadow, to Him is day,
And the end He knoweth,
And not on a blind and aimless way
The spirit goeth.

Man sees no future,—a phantom show
Is alone before him :
Past Time is dead, and the grasses grow,
And flowers bloom o'er him.

Nothing before, nothing behind ;
The steps of Faith
Fall on the seeming void, and find
The rock beneath.

The Present, the Present is all thou hast
For thy sure possessing ;
Like the patriarch's angel hold it fast
Till it gives its blessing.

Why fear the night ? why shrink from Death,
That phantom wan ?
There is nothing in heaven or earth beneath
Save God and man.

Peopling the shadows we turn from Him
And from one another ;
All is spectral and vague and dim
Save God and our brother !

Like warp and woof all destinies
Are woven fast,
Linked in sympathy like the keys
Of an organ vast.

Pluck one thread, and the web ye mar :
Break but one
Of a thousand keys, and the paining jar
Through all will run.

O restless spirit ! wherefore strain
Beyond thy sphere ?
Heaven and hell, with their joy and pain,
Are now and here.

All which is real now remaineth,
 And fadeth never :
 The hand which upholds it now sustaineth
 The soul forever.

Leaning on Him, make with reverent meekness
 His own thy will,
 And with strength from Him shall thy utter
 weakness
 Life's task fulfil.

And that cloud itself, which now before thee
 Lies dark in view,
 Shall with beams of light from the inner glory
 Be stricken through.

.

1847.

WORSHIP.

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the
 Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their
 affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."
 —*James i. 27.*

.

He asks no taper lights, on high surrounding
 The priestly altar and the saintly grave,
 No dolorous chant nor organ music sounding,
 Nor incense clouding up the twilight nave.

For he whom Jesus loved hath truly spoken :
 The holier worship which He deigns to bless
 Restores the lost, and binds the spirit broken,
 And feeds the widow and the fatherless !

.

O brother man ! fold to thy heart thy brother ;
Where pity dwells, the peace of God is there ;
To worship rightly is to love each other,
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.

Follow with reverent steps the great example
Of Him whose holy work was "doing good ;"
So shall the wide earth seem our Father's temple
Each loving life a psalm of gratitude.

Then shall all shackles fall ; the stormy clangour
Of wild war music o'er the earth shall cease ;
Love shall tread out the baleful fire of anger,
And in its ashes plant the tree of peace !

1848.

TO AVIS KEENE.

From Whittier's introduction to "The Meeting,"
we learn that the very presence of Avis Keene was
"a benediction." She was "a woman lovely in spirit and
person, whose words seemed a memory of love and tender
concern to her hearers."

.

O kind and generous friend, o'er whom
The sunset hues of Time are cast,
Painting, upon the overpast
And scattered clouds of noonday sorrow
The promise of a fairer morrow,
An earnest of the better life to come ;
The binding of the spirit broken,
The warning to the erring spoken,
The comfort of the sad,
The eye to see, the hand to cull
Of common things the beautiful,
The absent heart made glad
By simple gift or graceful token
Of love it needs as daily food,
All own one Source, and all are good !

Hence, tracking sunny cove and reach,
 Where spent waves glimmer up the beach,
 And toss their gifts of weed and shell
 From foamy curve and combing swell,
 No unbecfitting task was thine

To weave these flowers so soft and fair
 In unison with His design

Who loveth beauty everywhere ;
 And makes in every zone and clime,

In ocean and in upper air,
 ' All things beautiful in their time.'

.

THUS evermore,

On sky, and wave, and shore,

An all-pervading beauty seems to say :

God's love and power are one ; and they,

Who, like the thunder of a sultry day,

Smite to restore,

And they, who, like the gentle wind, uplift

The petals of the dew-wet flowers, and drift

Their perfume on the air,

Alike may serve Him, each, with their own gift,

Making their lives a prayer !

1850.

FIRST-DAY THOUGHTS.

IN calm and cool and silence, once again
 I find my old accustomed place among
 My brethren, where, perchance, no human tongue
 Shall utter words ; where never hymn is sung,
 Nor deep-toned organ blown, nor censer swung,
 Nor dim light falling through the pictured pane !
 There, syllabled by silence, let me hear
 The still small voice which reached the prophet's
 ear ;

Read in my heart a still diviner law
 Than Israel's leader on his tables saw !

There let me strive with each besetting sin,
Recall my wandering fancies, and restrain
The sore disquiet of a restless brain ;
And, as the path of duty is made plain,
May grace be given that I may walk therein,
Not like the hireling, for his selfish gain
With backward glances and reluctant tread,
Making a merit of his coward dread,
But, cheerful, in the light around me thrown,
Walking as one to pleasant service led ;
Doing God's will as if it were my own,
Yet trusting not in mine, but in His strength alone
1852.

THE CROSS.

Richard Dillingham, a young member of the Society of Friends, died in the Nashville penitentiary, where he was confined for the act of aiding the escape of fugitive slaves.

"THE cross, if rightly borne, shall be
No burden, but support to thee ;"
So, moved of old time for our sake,
The holy monk of Kempen spake.

Thou brave and true one ! upon whom
Was laid the cross of martyrdom,
How didst thou, in thy generous youth,
Bear witness to this blessed truth !

Thy cross of suffering and of shame
A staff within thy hands became,
In paths where faith alone could see
The Master's steps supporting thee.

Thine was the seed-time ; God alone
Beholds the end of what is sown ;
Beyond our vision, weak and dim,
The harvest-time is hid with Him.

Yet, unforgotten where it lies,
 That seed of generous sacrifice,
 Though seeming on the desert cast,
 Shall rise with bloom and fruit at last.

1852.

TRUST.

THE same old baffling questions! O my friend,
 I cannot answer them. In vain I send
 My soul into the dark, where never burn
 The lamps of science, nor the natural light
 Of Reason's sun and stars! I cannot learn
 Their great and solemn meanings, nor discern
 The awful secrets of the eyes which turn
 Evermore on us through the day and night
 With silent challenge and a dumb demand,
 Proffering the riddles of the dread unknown,
 Like the calm Sphinxes, with their eyes of stone,
 Questioning the centuries from their veils of
 sand!
 I have no answer for myself or thee,
 Save that I learned beside my mother's knee;
 "All is of God that is, and is to be;
 And God is good." Let this suffice us still,
 Resting in childlike trust upon His will
 Who moves to His great ends unthwarted by the ill.

1853.

THE VOICES.

.
 "WHAT is it that the crowd requite
 Thy love with hate, thy truth with lies?
 And but to faith, and not to sight,
 The walls of Freedom's temple rise?"

- "Yet do thy work; it shall succeed
In thine or in another's day;
And, if denied the victor's meed,
Thou shalt not lack the toiler's pay.
- "Faith shares the future's promise; Love's
Self-offering is a triumph won;
And each good thought or action moves
The dark world nearer to the sun.
- "Then faint not, falter not, nor plead
Thy weakness; truth itself is strong;
The lion's strength, the eagle's speed,
Are not alone vouchsafed to wrong.
- "Thy nature, which, through fire and flood,
To place or gain finds out its way,
Hath power to seek the highest good,
And duty's holiest call obey!
- "Strivest thou in darkness?—Foes without
In league with traitor thoughts within;
Thy night-watch kept with trembling Doubt
And pale Remorse the ghost of Sin?—
- "Hast thou not, on some week of storm,
Seen the sweet Sabbath breaking fair,
And cloud and shadow, sunlit, form
The curtains of its tent of prayer?
- "So, haply, when thy task shall end,
The wrong shall lose itself in right,
And all thy week-day darkness blend
With the long Sabbath of the light!"

1859.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF
JOSEPH STURGE.

Born 1793. Died 1859. Lord Brougham said, "There was the silent eloquence of a good life in the history of Joseph Sturge; a silent eloquence by which he persuaded

men to follow his example, and by which he always fortified and strengthened every good cause to which he devoted himself. . . . A sound judgment, a steady adhesion to his principles, and, when they differed from other men's, a tolerance of which I hardly ever saw the like; a perfect charity and even kindness towards those from whom he differed most—these were his characteristics."—*Memoirs of Joseph Sturge.*

.

THANKS for the good man's beautiful example,
 Who in the vilest saw
 Some sacred crypt or altar of a temple
 Still vocal with God's law.

.

Not his the golden pen's or lip's persuasion,
 But a fine sense of right,
 And Truth's directness, meeting each occasion
 Straight as a line of light.

His faith and works, like streams that intermingle,
 In the same channel ran:
 The crystal clearness of an eye kept single
 Shamed all the frauds of man.

The very gentlest of all human natures
 He joined to courage strong,
 And love outreaching unto all God's creatures,
 With sturdy hate of wrong.

Tender as woman, manliness and meekness
 In him were so allied
 That they who judged him by his strength or
 weakness
 Saw but a single side.

Men failed, betrayed him, but his zeal seemed
 nourished
 By failure and by fall;
 Still a large faith in human-kind he cherished,
 And in God's love for all.

ON A PRAYER BOOK.

With its frontispiece, Ary Scheffer's "Christus Consolator," Americanized by the omission of the Black Man.

It is hardly to be credited, yet is true, that in the anxiety of the Northern merchant to conciliate his Southern customer, a publisher was found ready thus to mutilate Scheffer's picture. He intended his edition for use in the Southern States undoubtedly, but copies fell into the hands of those who believed literally in a gospel which was to preach liberty to the captive.

.
O HEART of mine, keep patience! Looking forth,
As from the Mount of Vision, I behold,
Pure, just, and free, the Church of Christ on earth;
The martyr's dream, the golden age foretold!
And found, at last, the mystic Graal I see,
Brimmed with His blessing, pass from lip to lip
In sacred pledge of human fellowship;
And over all the songs of angels hear;
Songs of the love that casteth out all fear;
Songs of the Gospel of Humanity!
Lo! in the midst, with the same look He wore,
Healing and blessing on Gennesaret's shore,
Folding together, with the all-tender might
Of His great love, the dark hands and the white,
Stands the Consoler, soothing every pain,
Making all burdens light, and breaking every chain.

1859.

MY PSALM.

.

ALL as God wills, who wisely heeds
To give or to withhold,
And knoweth more of all my needs
Than all my prayers have told!

Enough that blessings undeserved
Have marked my erring track ;
That wheresoe'er my feet have swerved,
His chastening turned me back ;
That more and more a Providence
Of love is understood,
Making the springs of time and sense
Sweet with eternal good ;—
That death seems but a covered way
Which opens into light,
Wherein no blinded child can stray
Beyond the Father's sight ;
That care and trial seem at last,
Through Memory's sunset air,
Like mountain-ranges overpast,
In purple distance fair ;
That all the jarring notes of life
Seem blending in a psalm,
And all the angles of its strife
Slow rounding into calm.
And so the shadows fall apart,
And so the west winds play ;
And all the windows of my heart
I open to the day.

1859.

THE SHADOW AND THE LIGHT.

“And I sought, whence is Evil : I set before the eye of my spirit the whole creation ; whatsoever we see therein,—sea, earth, air, stars, trees, moral creatures,—yea, whatsoever there is we do not see,—angels and spiritual powers. Where is evil, and whence comes it, since God the Good hath created all things ? Why made He anything at all of evil, and not rather by His Almighty cause it not to be ? These thoughts I turned in my miserable heart, overcharged with most gnawing cares. . . . And, admonished to return

to myself, I entered even into my inmost soul, Thou being my guide, and beheld even beyond my soul and mind the Light unchangeable. He who knows the Truth knows what that Light is, and he that knows it knows Eternity ! O Truth, who art Eternity ! Love, who art Truth ! Eternity, who art Love ! And I beheld that Thou madest all things good, and to Thee is nothing whatsoever evil. From the angel to the worm, from the first motion to the last, Thou settest each in its place, and everything is good in its kind. Woe is me !—how high art Thou in the highest, how deep in the deepest ! and Thou never departest from us and we scarcely return to Thee."—AUGUSTINE'S *Soliloquies*, Book VII.

THE fourteen centuries fall away
Between us and the Afric saint,
And at his side we urge, to-day,
The immemorial quest and old complaint.

Oh, why and whither ? God knows all ;
I only know that He is good,
And that whatever may befall
Or here or there, must be the best that could.

Between the dreadful cherubim
A Father's face I still discern,
As Moses looked of old on Him,
And saw His glory into goodness turn !

For He is merciful as just ;
And so, by faith correcting sight,
I bow before His will, and trust
Howe'er they seem He doeth all things right.

And dare to hope that He will make
The rugged smooth, the doubtful plain ;
His mercy never quite forsake ;
His healing visit every realm of pain ;

That suffering is not His revenge
Upon His creatures weak and frail,
Sent on a pathway new and strange
With feet that wander and with eyes that fail ;

That, o'er the crucible of pain,
Watches the tender eye of Love
The slow transmuting of the chain
Whose links are iron below to gold above!

Ah me! we doubt the shining skies,
Seen through our shadows of offence,
And drown with our poor childish cries
The cradle-hymn of kindly Providence.

And still we love the evil cause,
And of the just effect complain:
We tread upon life's broken laws,
And murmur at our self-inflicted pain;

We turn as from the light, and find
Our spectral shapes before us thrown,
As they who leave the sun behind
Walk in the shadows of themselves alone.

And scarce by will or strength of ours
We set our faces to the day;
Weak, wavering, blind, the Eternal Powers
Alone can turn us from ourselves away.

Our weakness is the strength of sin,
But love must needs be stronger far,
Outreaching all and gathering in
The erring spirit and the wandering star.

A Voice grows with the growing years;
Earth, hushing down her bitter cry,
Looks upward from her graves, and hears,
"The Resurrection and the Life am I."

O Love Divine!—whose constant beam
Shines on the eyes that will not see,
And waits to bless us, while we dream
Thou leavest us because we turn from Thee

All souls that struggle and aspire,
All hearts of prayer by Thee are lit;
And, dim or clear, Thy tongues of fire
On dusky tribes and twilight centuries sit.

Nor bounds, nor clime, nor creed Thou know'st,
Wide as our need Thy favours fall;
The white wings of the Holy Ghost
Stoop, seen or unseen, o'er the heads of all.

O Beauty, old yet ever new!
Eternal Voice, and Inward Word,
The Logos of the Greek and Jew, [heard!
The old sphere-music which the Samian

Truth which the sage and prophet saw,
Long sought without, but found within,
The Law of Love beyond all law,
The Life o'erflooding mortal death and sin

Shine on us with the light which glowed
Upon the trance-bound shepherd's way,
Who saw the Darkness overflowed
And drowned by tides of everlasting Day.

Shine, light of God!—make broad thy scope
To all who sin and suffer; more
And better than we dare to hope [poor!
With Heaven's compassion make our longings

1860.

THY WILL BE DONE.

WE see not, know not; all our way
Is night,—with Thee alone is day:
From out the torrent's troubled drift,
Above the storm our prayers we lift,
Thy will be done!

The flesh may fail, the heart may faint,
But who are we to make complaint,
Or dare to plead, in times like these,
The weakness of our love of ease?
Thy will be done!

We take with solemn thankfulness
Our burden up, nor ask it less,
And count it joy that even we
May suffer, serve, or wait for Thee,
Whose will be done !

Though dim as yet in tint and line,
We trace Thy picture's wise design,
And thank Thee that our age supplies
Its dark relief of sacrifice.
Thy will be done !

And if, in our unworthiness,
Thy sacrificial wine we press ;
If from Thy ordeal's heated bars
Our feet are seamed with crimson scars,
Thy will be done !

If, for the age to come, this hour
Of trial hath vicarious power,
And, blest by Thee, our present pain,
Be Liberty's eternal gain,
Thy will be done !

Strike, Thou the Master, we Thy keys,
The anthem of the destinies !
The minor of Thy loftier strain,
Our hearts shall breathe the old refrain,
Thy will be done !

1861.

ANDREW RYKMAN'S PRAYER.

.
THOU, O Elder Brother ! who
In Thy flesh our trial knew,
Thou, who hast been touched by these
Our most sad infirmities,
Thou alone the gulf canst span
In the dual heart of man,
And between the soul and sense
Reconcile all difference,

Change the dream of me and mine
For the truth of Thee and Thine,
And, through chaos, doubt, and strife,
Interfuse Thy calm of life.

.
Suffer it that I to Thee
As an hired servant be ;
Let the lowliest task be mine,
Grateful, so the work be Thine ;
Let me find the humblest place
In the shadow of Thy grace :
Blest to me were any spot
Where temptation whispers not.
If there be some weaker one,
Give me strength to help him on ;
If a blinder soul there be,
Let me guide him nearer Thee.
Make my mortal dreams come true
With the work I fain would do ;
Clothe with life the weak intent,
Let me be the thing I meant ;
Let me find in Thy employ
Peace that dearer is than joy ;
Out of self to love be led
And to heaven acclimated,
Until all things sweet and good
Seem my natural habitude.

1863.

THE GRAVE BY THE LAKE.

At the mouth of the Melvin River, which empties into Moultonboro Bay in Lake Winnepesaukee, is a great mound. The Ossipee Indians had their home in the neighbourhood of the bay, which is plentifully stocked with fish, and many relics of their occupation have been found.

WHERE the Great Lake's sunny smiles
Dimple round its hundred isles,

And the mountain's granite ledge
Cleaves the water like a wedge,
Ringed about with smooth, gray stones,
Rest the giant's mighty bones.

.

Who that Titan cromlech fills ?
Forest-kaiser, lord o' the hills ?
Knight who on the birchen tree
Carved his savage heraldry ?
Priest o' the pine-wood temples dim,
Prophet, sage, or wizard grim ?

.

Now, whate'er he may have been,
Low he lies as other men ;
On his mound the partridge drums,
There the noisy blue-jay comes ;
Rank nor name nor pomp has he
In the grave's democracy.

.

Strange that on his burial-sod
Harebells bloom, and golden-rod,
While the soul's dark horoscope
Holds no starry sign of hope !
Is the Unseen with sight at odds ?
Nature's pity more than God's ?

.

Oh, the generations old
Over whom no church-bells tolled,
Christless, lifting up blind eyes
To the silence of the skies !
For the innumerable dead
Is my soul disquieted.

Where be now these silent hosts ?
Where the camping-ground of ghosts ?
Where the spectral conscripts led
To the white tents of the dead ?
What strange shore or chartless sea
Holds the awful mystery ?

Then the warm sky stooped to make
Double sunset in the lake ;
While above I saw with it,
Range on range, the mountains lit ;
And the calm and splendour stole
Like an answer to my soul.

Hear'st thou, O of little faith,
What to thee the mountain saith,
What is whispered by the trees ?—
“ Cast on God thy care for these ;
Trust Him, if Thy sight be dim :
Doubt for them is doubt of Him.

“ Blind must be their close-shut eyes
Where like night the sunshine lies,
Fiery-linked the self-forged chain
Binding ever sin to pain,
Strong their prison-house of will,
But without He waiteth still.

“ Not with hatred's undertow
Doth the Love Eternal flow ;
Every chain that spirits wear
Crumbles in the breath of prayer ;
And the penitent's desire
Opens every gate of fire.

“ Still Thy love, O Christ arisen,
Yearns to reach these souls in prison !
Through all depths of sin and loss
Drops the plummet of Thy cross !
Never yet abyss was found
Deeper than that cross could sound ! ”

Therefore well may Nature keep
Equal faith with all who sleep,
Set her watch of hills around
Christian grave and heathen mound,
And to cairn and kirkyard send
Summer's flowery dividend.

Keep, O pleasant Melvin stream.
Thy sweet laugh in shade and gleam !
On the Indian's grassy tomb
Swing, O flowers, your bells of bloom !
Deep below, as high above.
Sweeps the circle of God's love.

1865.

THE ETERNAL GOODNESS.

O FRIENDS ! with whom my feet have trod
The quiet aisles of prayer,
Glad witness to your zeal of God
And love of man I bear.

I trace your lines of argument ;
Your logic linked and strong
I weigh as one who dreads dissent,
And fears a doubt as wrong.

But still my human hands are weak
To hold your iron creeds :
Against the words ye bid me speak
My heart within me pleads.

Who fathoms the Eternal Thought ?
Who talks of scheme and plan ?
The Lord is God ! He needeth not
The poor device of man.

I walk with bare, hushed feet the ground
Ye tread with boldness shod ;
I dare not fix with mete and bound
The love and power of God.

Ye praise His justice ; even such
His pitying love I deem :
Ye seek a king : I fain would touch
The robe that hath no seam.

Ye see the curse which overbroods
A world of pain and loss ;
I hear our Lord's beatitudes
And prayer upon the cross.

More than your schoolmen teach, within
Myself, alas ! I know :
Too dark ye cannot paint the sin,
Too small the merit show.

I bow my forehead to the dust,
I veil mine eyes for shame,
And urge, in trembling self-distrust,
A prayer without a claim.

I see the wrong that round me lies,
I feel the guilt within ;
I hear, with groan, and travail-cries,
The world confess its sin.

Yet, in the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed trust my spirit clings ;
I know that God is good !

Not mine to look where cherubim
And seraphs may not see,
But nothing can be good in Him
Which evil is in me.

The wrong that pains my soul below
I dare not throne above,
I know not of His hate,—I know
His goodness and His love.

I dimly guess from blessings known
Of greater out of sight,
And, with the chastened Psalmist, own
His judgments too are right.

I long for household voices gone,
For vanished smiles I long,
But God hath led my dear ones on,
And He can do no wrong.

I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

And if my heart and flesh are weak
To bear an untried pain,
The bruised reed He will not break,
But strengthen and sustain.

No offering of my own I have,
Nor works my faith to prove ;
I can but give the gifts He gave,
And plead His love for love.

And so, beside the Silent Sea
I wait the muffled oar ;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air ;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care.

O brothers ! if my faith is vain,
If hopes like these betray,
Pray for me that my feet may gain
The sure and safer way.

And Thou, O Lord ! by whom are seen
Thy creatures as they be,
Forgive me, if too close I lean
My human heart on Thee !

OUR MASTER.

The following note to Whittier's publisher accompanied the MS. of this poem: "I enclose for Annie Fields a poem of mine which has never seen light. It presents my view of Christ as the special manifestation of the love of God to humanity. . . ."

IMMORTAL Love, for ever full,
For ever flowing free,
For ever shared, for ever whole,
A never-ebbing sea!

Our outward lips confess the name
All other names above;
Love only knoweth whence it came,
And comprehendeth love.

Blow, winds or God, awake and blow
The mists of earth away!
Shine out, O Light Divine, and show
How wide and far we stray!

Hush every lip, close every book,
The strife of tongues forbear;
Why forward reach, or backward look,
For love that clasps like air?

We may not climb the heavenly steep
To bring the Lord Christ down:
In vain we search the lowest deeps,
For Him no depths can drown.

Nor holy bread, nor blood of grape,
The lineaments restore
Of Him we know in outward shape
And in the flesh no more.

He cometh not a king to reign;
The world's long hope is dim;
The weary centuries watch in vain
The clouds of heaven for Him.

Death comes, life goes : the asking eye
And ear are answerless ;
The grave is dumb, the hollow sky
Is sad with silentness.

The letter fails, and systems fall,
And every symbol wanes ;
The Spirit over-brooding all
Eternal Love remains.

And not for signs in heaven above
Or earth below they look,
Who know with John His smile of love,
With Peter His rebuke.

In joy of inward peace, or sense
Of sorrow over sin,
He is His own best evidence,
His witness is within.

No fable old, nor mythic lore,
Nor dream of bards and seers,
No dead fact stranded on the shore
Of the oblivious years ;—

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is He ;
And faith has still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.

The healing of His seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain ;
We touch Him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.

Through Him the first fond prayers are said
Our lips of childhood frame,
The last low whispers of our dead
Are burdened with His name.

O Lord and Master of us all !
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own Thy sway, we hear Thy call,
We test our lives by Thine.

Thou judgest us; Thy purity
Doth all our lusts condemn;
The love that draws us nearer Thee
Is hot with wrath to them.

Our thoughts lie open to Thy sight;
And, naked to Thy glance,
Our secret sins are in the light
Of Thy pure countenance.

Thy healing pains, a keen distress,
Thy tender light shines in;
Thy sweetness is the bitterness,
Thy grace the pang of sin.

Yet, weak and blinded though we be,
Thou dost our service own;
We bring our varying gifts to Thee,
And Thou rejectest none.

To Thee our full humanity,
Its joys and pains, belong;
The wrong of man to man on Thee
Inflicts a deeper wrong.

Who hates, hates Thee, who loves becomes
Therein to Thee allied;
All sweet accords of hearts and homes
In Thee are multiplied.

Deep strike Thy roots, O heavenly Vine,
Within our earthly sod,
Most human and yet most divine,
The flower of man and God!

O Love! O Life! Our faith and sight
Thy presence maketh one,
As through transfigured clouds of white
We trace the noonday sun.

So, to our mortal eyes subdued,
Flesh-veiled, but not concealed,
We know in Thee the Fatherhood
And heart of God revealed.

We faintly hear, we dimly see,
In differing phrase we pray;
But, dim and clear, we own in Thee
The Light, the Truth, the Way!

The homage that we render Thee
Is still our Father's own;
No jealous claim or rivalry
Divides the Cross and Throne.

To do Thy will is more than praise,
As words are less than deeds,
And simple trust can find Thy ways
We miss with chart of creeds.

No pride of self Thy service hath,
No place for me and mine;
Our human strength is weakness, death
Our life, apart from Thine.

Apart from Thee all gain is loss,
All labour vainly done;
The solemn shadow of Thy Cross
Is better than the sun.

Alone, O Love ineffable!
Thy saving name is given;
To turn aside from Thee is hell,
To walk with Thee is heaven!

How vain, secure in all Thou art,
Our noisy championship!—
The sighing of the contrite heart
Is more than flattering lip.

Not Thine the bigot's partial plea,
Nor Thine the zealot's ban;
Thou well canst spare a love of Thee
Which ends in hate of man.

Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,
What may Thy service be?—
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
But simply following Thee.

We bring no ghastly holocaust,
We pile no graven stone;
He serves thee best who loveth most
His brothers and Thy own.

Thy litanies, sweet offices
Of love and gratitude;
Thy sacramental liturgies,
The joy of doing good.

In vain shall waves of incense drift
The vaulted nave around,
In vain the minster turret lift
Its brazen weights of sound.

The heart must ring Thy Christmas bells,
Thy inward altars raise;
Its faith and hope Thy canticles,
And its obedience praise!

1866.

LIFE'S COMPANIONS.

(From "Snow-Bound.")

"A Homely Picture of old New England Homes" is what Whittier called "Snow-bound, a Winter Idyll," in a note to Fields, his publisher. The poem carries its own recommendation with it, and needs no other. Whilst notable for "its vividness, its fidelity of homely detail, its unerring feeling for the sentiment of the hearth-side," its greatest power of appeal lies in the beautiful expression by the poet of his memories of father, mother, uncle, aunt and sisters,—especially of "our youngest and our dearest," Elizabeth H. Whittier, who was to her brother what Dorothy Wordsworth was to William.

.
We tread the paths their feet have worn,
We sit beneath their orchard trees,
We hear, like them, the hum of bees
And rustle of the bladed corn;

We turn the pages that they read,
Their written words we linger o'er,
But in the sun they cast no shade,
No voice is heard, no sign is made,
No step is on the conscious floor!
Yet Love will dream, and Faith will trust,
(Since He who knows our need is just,) .
That somehow, somewhere, meet we must.
Alas for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress-trees!
Who, hopeless, lays his dead away,
Nor looks to see the breaking day
Across the mournful marbles play!
Who hath not learned, in hours of faith,
The truth to flesh and sense unknown,
That Life is ever lord of Death,
And Love can never lose its own!

. . . The dear aunt, whose smile of cheer
And voice in dreams I see and hear,—
The sweetest woman ever Fate
Perverse denied a household mate,
Who, lonely, homeless, not the less
Found peace in love's unselfishness,
And welcome wheresoe'er she went,
A calm and gracious element,
Whose presence seemed the sweet income
And womanly atmosphere of home,—
Called up her girlhood memories,
The huskings and the apple-bees,
The sleigh-rides and the summer sails,
Weaving through all the poor details
And homespun warp of circumstance
A golden woof-thread of romance.
For well she kept her genial mood
And simple faith of maidenhood;
Before her still a cloud-land lay,
The mirage loomed across her way;
The morning dew, that dries so soon
With others, glistened at her noon;

Through years of toil and soil and care,
From glossy tress to thin gray hair,
All unprofaned she held apart
The virgin fancies of the heart.
Be shame to him of woman born
Who hath for such but thought of scorn.

There, too, our elder sister plied
Her evening task the stand beside ;
A full, rich nature, free to trust,
Truthful and almost sternly just,
Impulsive, earnest, prompt to act,
And make her generous thought a fact,
Keeping with many a light disguise
The secret of self-sacrifice.
O heart sore-tried ! thou hast the best
That Heaven itself could give thee,—rest,
Rest from all bitter thoughts and things !
How many a poor one's blessing went
With thee beneath the low green tent
Whose curtain never outward swings !

As one who held herself a part
Of all she saw, and let her heart
Against the household bosom lean,
Upon the motley-braided mat
Our youngest and our dearest sat,
Lifting her large, sweet, asking eyes,
Now bathed in the unfading green
And holy peace of Paradise.
Oh, looking from some heavenly hill,
Or from the shade of saintly palms,
Or silver reach of river calms,
Do those large eyes behold me still ?
With me one little year ago :—
The chill weight of the winter snow
For months upon her grave has lain ;
And now, when summer south-winds blow
And brier and harebell bloom again,
I tread the pleasant paths we trod,
I see the violet-sprinkled sod

Whereon she leaned, too frail and weak
 The hillside flowers she loved to seek,
 Yet following me where'er I went
 With dark eyes full of love's content.
 The birds are glad; the brier-rose fills
 The air with sweetness; all the hills
 Stretch green to June's unclouded sky;
 But still I wait with ear and eye
 For something gone which should be nigh,
 A loss in all familiar things,
 In flower that blooms, and bird that sings.
 And yet, dear heart! remembering thee,
 Am I not richer than of old?
 Safe in thy immortality,
 What change can reach the wealth I hold?
 What chance can mar the pearl and gold
 Thy love hath left in trust with me?
 And while in life's late afternoon,
 Where cool and long the shadows grow,
 I walk to meet the night that soon
 Shall shape and shadow overflow,
 I cannot feel that thou art far,
 Since near at need the angels are;
 And when the sunset gates unbar,
 Shall I not see thee waiting stand,
 And, white against the evening star,
 The welcome of thy beckoning hand?

1866.

THE MEETING.

God should be most where man is least:
 So, where is neither church nor priest,
 And never rag of form or creed
 To clothe the nakedness of need,—
 Where farmer-folk in silence meet,—
 I turn my bell-unsummoned feet;

Confess the universal want,
And share whatever heaven may grant.

.

Not on one favoured forehead fell
Of old the fire-tongued miracle,
But flamed o'er all the thronging host
The baptism of the Holy Ghost;
Heart answers heart: in one desire
The blending lines of prayer aspire;
"Where, in My name, meet two or three,"
Our Lord hath said, "I there will be!"

So sometimes comes to soul and sense
The feeling which is evidence
That very near about us lies
The realm of spiritual mysteries.
The sphere of the supernal powers
Impinges on this world of ours.

.

The breath of a diviner air
Blows down the answer of a prayer:
That all our sorrow, pain, and doubt
A great compassion clasps about,
And law and goodness, love and force,
Are wedded fast beyond divorce.
Then duty leaves to love its task,
The beggar Self forgets to ask;
With smile of trust and folded hands,
The passive soul in waiting stands
To feel, as flowers the sun and dew,
The One true Life its own renew.

So to the calmly gathered thought
The innermost of truth is taught,
The mystery dimly understood,
That love of God is love of good,
And, chiefly, its divinest trace
In Him of Nazareth's holy face;
That to be saved is only this,—
Salvation from our selfishness.

.

That worship's deeper meaning lies
In mercy and not sacrifice,
Not proud humilities of sense
And posturing of penitence,
But love's unforced obedience ;
That Book and Church and Day are given
For man, not God,—for earth, not heaven,—
The blessed means to holiest ends,
Not masters, but benignant friends ;
That the dear Christ dwells not afar,
The king of some remoter star,
Listening, at times, with flattered ear
To homage wrung from selfish fear,
But here, amidst the poor and blind,
The bound and suffering of our kind,
In works we do, in prayers we pray,
Life of our life, He lives to-day.

1868.

MY TRIUMPH.

.
OTHERS shall sing the song,
Others shall right the wrong,—
Finish what I begin,
And all I fail of win.

What matter, I or they ?
Mine or another's day,
So the right word be said
And life the sweeter made ?

Hail to the coming singers !
Hail to the brave light-bringers !
Forward I reach and share
All that they sing and dare.

The airs of heaven blow o'er me ;
A glory shines before me
Of what mankind shall be,—
Pure, generous, brave, and free.

A dream of man and woman
Diviner but still human,
Solving the riddle old,
Shaping the Age of Gold !
The love of God and neighbour ;
An equal-handed labour ;
The richer life, where beauty
Walks hand in hand with duty.
Ring, bells in unrequited steeples,
The joy of unborn peoples !
Sound, trumpets far off blown,
Your triumph is my own !
Parcel and part of all,
I keep the festival,
Fore-reach the good to be,
And share the victory.
I feel the earth move sunward,
I join the great march onward,
And take, by faith, while living,
My freehold of thanksgiving.

1870.

MIRIAM.

‘ ‘ ‘ ‘
We search the world for truth ; we cull
The good, the pure, the beautiful,
From graven stone and written scroll,
From all old flower-fields of the soul ;
And, weary seekers of the best,
We come back laden from our quest,
To find that all the sages said
Is in the Book our mothers read,
And all our treasure of old thought
In His harmonious fullness wrought
Who gathers in one sheaf complete
The scattered blades of God's sown wheat,
The common growth that maketh good
His all-embracing Fatherhood.

1870.

THE BREWING OF SOMA.

"These libations mixed with milk have been prepared for Indra : offer Soma to the drinker of Soma."—*Vashista*.
Trans. by Max Müller.

DEAR Lord and Father of mankind,
 Forgive our foolish ways !
Re-clothe us in our rightful mind,
In purer lives Thy service find,
 In deeper reverence, praise.
In simple trust like theirs who heard
 Beside the Syrian sea
The gracious calling of the Lord,
Let us, like them, without a word,
 Rise up and follow Thee.
O Sabbath rest by Galilee !
 O calm of hills above,
Where Jesus knelt to share with Thee
The silence of eternity
 Interpreted by love !
With that deep hush subduing all
 Our words and works that drown
The tender whisper of Thy call,
As noiseless let Thy blessing fall
 As fell Thy manna down.
Drop Thy still dews of quietness,
 Till all our strivings cease ;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
 The beauty of Thy peace.
Breathe through the heats of our desire
 Thy coolness and Thy balm ;
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire ;
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
 O still, small voice of calm !

IN QUEST.

As I listened there,
Through the expectant silences of prayer,
Somewhat I seemed to hear, which hath to me
Been hope, strength, comfort, and I give it thee.

"The riddle of the world is understood
Only by him who feels that God is good,
As only he can feel who makes his love
The ladder of his faith, and climbs above
On th' rounds of his best instincts; draws no line
Between mere human goodness and divine,
But, judging God by what in him is best,
With a child's trust leans on a Father's breast,
And hears unmoved the old creeds babble still
Of kingly power and dread caprice of will,
Chary of blessing, prodigal of curse,
The pitiless doomsman of the universe.
Can Hatred ask for love? Can Selfishness
Invite to Self-denial? Is He less
Than man in kindly dealing? Can He break
His own great law of fatherhood, forsake
And curse His children? Not for earth and heaven
Can separate tables of the law be given.
No rule can bind which He himself denies;
The truths of time are not eternal lies."

So heard I; and the chaos round me spread
To light and order grew; and, "Lord," I said,
"Our sins are our tormentors, worst of all
Felt in distrustful shame that dares not call
Upon Thee as our Father. We have set
A strange god up, but Thou remainest yet.
All that I feel of pity Thou hast known
Before I was; my best is all Thy own.
From Thy great heart of goodness mine but drew
Wishes and prayers; but Thou, O Lord, wilt do,
In Thy own time, by ways I cannot see,
All that I feel when I am nearest Thee!"

THE FRIEND'S BURIAL.

.

O SWEET, calm face that seemed to wear
The look of sins forgiven !

O voice of prayer that seemed to bear
Our own needs up to heaven !

How reverent in our midst she stood,
Or knelt in grateful praise !
What grace of Christian womanhood
Was in her household ways !

For still her holy living meant
No duty left undone ;
The heavenly and the human blent
Their kindred loves in one.

And if her life small leisure found
For feasting ear and eye,
And Pleasure, on her daily round,
She passed unpausing by,

Yet with her went a secret sense
Of all things sweet and fair,
And Beauty's gracious providence
Refreshed her unaware.

She kept her line of rectitude
With love's unconscious ease ;
Her kindly instincts understood
All gentle courtesies.

An inborn charm of graciousness
Made sweet her smile and tone,
And glorified her farm-wife dress
With beauty not its own.

The dear Lord's best interpreters
Are humble human souls ;
The Gospel of a life like hers
Is more than books or scrolls.

From scheme and creed the light goes out,
The saintly fact survives ;
The blessed Master none can doubt
Revealed in holy lives.

1873.

REQUIREMENT.

WE live by Faith ; but Faith is not the slave
Of text and legend. Reason's voice and God's
Nature's and Duty's, never are at odds.
What asks our Father of His children, save
Justice and mercy and humility,
A reasonable service of good deeds,
Pure living, tenderness to human needs,
Reverence and trust, and prayer for light to see
The Master's footprints in our daily ways ?
No knotted scourge nor sacrificial knife,
But the calm beauty of an ordered life
Whose very breathing is unworded praise !—
A life that stands as all true lives have stood,
Firm-rooted in the faith that God is Good.

1881.

THE WORD.

VOICE of the Holy Spirit, making known
Man to himself, a witness swift and sure,
Warning, approving, true and wise and pure,
Counsel and guidance that misleadeth none !
By Thee the mystery of life is read ;
The picture-writing of the world's gray seers,
The myths and parables of the primal years,
Whose letter kills, by Thee interpreted
Take healthful meanings fitted to our needs,
And in the soul's vernacular express
The common law of simple righteousness.
Hatred of cant and doubt of human creeds
May well be felt : the unpardonable sin
Is to deny the Word of God within !

1881.

BY THEIR WORKS.

CALL him not heretic whose works attest
 His faith in goodness by no creed confessed.
 Whatever in love's name is truly done
 To free the bound and lift the fallen one
 Is done to Christ. Whoso in deed and word
 Is not against Him labours for our Lord.
 When He, who, sad and weary, longing sore
 For love's sweet service, sought the sisters' door,
 One saw the heavenly, one the human guest,
 But who shall say which loved the Master best?

1881.

AT LAST.

Sent to T. B. Aldrich, for "The Atlantic," with this message: "As the expression of my deepest religious feeling it may not be without interest, and it may help some enquiring spirit." The poem was recited by one of the little group of relations who stood by the poet's bedside as the last moment of his life approached.

WHEN on my day of life the night is falling,
 And, in the winds from unsunned spaces blown,
 I hear far voices out of darkness calling
 My feet to paths unknown,
 Thou who hast made my home of life so pleasant
 Leave not its tenant when its walls decay;
 O Love Divine, O Helper ever present,
 Be Thou my strength and stay!
 Be near me when all else is from me drifting;
 Earth, sky, home's pictures, days of shade and
 shine,
 And kindly faces to my own uplifting
 The love which answers mine.
 have but Thee, my Father! let Thy spirit
 Be with me then to comfort and uphold;
 No gate of pearl, no branch of palm I merit,
 Nor street of shining gold.

Suffice it if—my good and ill unreckoned,
 And both forgiven through Thy abounding
 grace—
 I find myself by hands familiar beckoned
 Unto my fitting place.

Some humble door among Thy many mansions,
 Some sheltering shade where sin and striving
 cease,
 And flows forever through heaven's green
 The river of Thy peace. [expansions

There, from the music round about me stealing,
 I fain would learn the new and holy song,
 And find at last, beneath Thy trees of healing,
 The life for which I long.

1882.

THE LIGHT THAT IS FELT.

The origin of this poem is explained in the following letter from Mrs. George A. Palmer, of Elmira, N.Y. :
 "When my oldest daughter was two and a half years old, she knew Whittier's 'Barefoot Boy' by heart. Once, in going ahead of me in a dark hall, she turned with sudden fear, and said, 'Mamma, take hold of my hand, so it will not be so dark.' This incident and the fact of her affection for Mr. Whittier's poetry was reported to him by a friend of the family. My surprise and delight were great when, in April, 1884, I received a kind letter from the poet and a manuscript copy of the poem, which was afterwards published in the Christmas number of *St. Nicholas*. In his letter Mr. Whittier said, 'I am glad to have such a friend in thy little girl. Her good opinion of my verses is worth more to me than that of a learned reviewer. I send a rhymed paraphrase of her own beautiful thought.'"

A TENDER child of summers three,
 Seeking her little bed at night,
 Paused on the dark stair timidly.
 "Oh, mother! Take my hand," said she,
 "And then the dark will all be light."

We older children grope our way
From dark behind to dark before ;
And only when our hands we lay,
Dear Lord, in Thine, the night is day,
And there is darkness nevermore.

Reach downward to the sunless days
Wherein our guides are blind as we,
And faith is small and hope delays ;
Take Thou the hands of prayer we raise,
And let us feel the light of Thee !

1884.

A FRAGMENT.

Found among Whittier's papers, in his handwriting,
but undated.

THE dreadful burden of our sins we feel,
The pain of wounds which Thou alone canst heal,
To whom our weakness is our strong appeal.

From the black depths, the ashes, and the dross
Of our waste lives, we reach out to Thy cross,
And by its fulness measure all our loss !

That holy sign reveals Thee : throned above
No Moloch sits, no false, vindictive Jove—
Thou art our Father, and Thy name is Love !
